Volume 16, Number 1, Spring 2017 DOI 10.2390/jsse-v16-i1-1630

Richard Neumann

American Democracy in Distress: The Failure of Social Education

The primary purpose of this essay is to further understanding of the relationship between social education programs in public schools in the United States and the health of its democracy. A secondary purpose is to encourage reflection on the condition of democracy in other countries and the adequacy of social education programs in these countries in preparing youths for democratic citizenship. Extant data on social education in American public schools are analyzed and discussed in relation to selected social and economic conditions and the health of democracy in the United States. The conclusion is that social education programs in the United States do not adequately prepare young people for political participation and this deficiency has contributed significantly to distress in American democracy.

Keywords:
Democratic citizenship education, democracy and education, social education, preparation for political participation

1 Introduction

Most readers would probably agree with the diagnosis presented in the main title of this article and only dispute the degree of affliction. Although fewer would likely concur with the subtitle, particularly social studies teachers and those who prepare them, skeptics would be more than hard-pressed to locate evidence of success in democratic citizenship education beyond the isolated innovative educator or program. Drawing from research in political science, economics, social education, and other investigations, the diagnosis submitted here identifies symptoms of democracy's dysfunction in the United States and examines evidence linking social education as a causal factor. While the failure of social education is not solely responsible for democracy's distress, since ultimate power in a democratic republic resides properly with citizens, it is central. When citizens lack sufficient knowledge, skills, and virtues for political participation, the vitality of democracy is at risk.

The distress in American democracy is complex and comprehensive analysis is obviously not possible in these few pages. There is value, however, in highlighting some of the more salient symptoms of democracy's deteriorating condition, which receive little attention in mainstream educational literature and that for many are often more psychologically comfortable to suppress or deny. More important to the discussion here is the connection between democracy and social education. While democracy's dependence on an educated citizenry has long been affirmed, desired outcomes of social education, particularly the preparation of young people for political participation as democratic citizens, continue to be marginalized in policy discourse on educational goals and student achievement. Although the thesis presented here—failure of social education has contributed significantly to deepening distress in American democracy—is not novel, re-presenting it in a somewhat different analytic framework and with analogy to medicine may serve to better illuminate the situation and generate deeper reflection, dialogue, and action toward improving the quality of social education in public elementary and secondary schools, particularly the preparation of young people for political participation.

Richard Neumann, Ph.D. is Professor and Chair at the *Division of Education, San Diego State University, Imperial Valley Campus, 720 Heber Avenue, Calexico, California 92231*
Email: rneumann@mail.sdsu.edu

2 Symptoms of distress

Most Americans even moderately attentive to politics would likely acknowledge the base structure that is perhaps most problematic to the vitality of American democracy: a political system reliant on campaign contributions. When the architecture of this system and its implications are contemplated deeply, relations of power become clearer. Clarity of this sort is not uncommon among readers of academic journals in social science, and most probably do not require validation by political scientists from Princeton and Northwestern of the pernicious effects of money in politics: "The central point that emerges from our research is that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence" (Gilens & Page, 2014, p. 565). But do high school students need to be informed of this research and challenged to analyze the structure of the American political system, forces effecting initiation of policy, and motivations in policy decision-making? For most Americans, the highest level of formal social education obtained is high school (Ryan & Bauman, 2016), and therefore, high school graduates' understanding of their country's political system and the adequacy of their preparation for political participation is crucial.

Thus far this century the most disastrous economic consequence of policy established at behest of business is the Great Recession. The Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (2011) provides pointed comments on the calamity:

> "More than 30 years of deregulation and reliance on self-regulation by financial institutions, championed by former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan and others, supported by successive administrations and Congresses,

> and actively pushed by the powerful financial industry at every turn, had stripped away key safe guards, which could have helped avoid catastrophe (p. xviii).

Another major disaster of this young century attributable to government compliance with industry demands is the massive oil spill by British Petroleum in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Glickman (2010) explains:

> "Over the course of several administrations, the MMS [Minerals Management Service] was "captured" by the oil industry, and came to see industry, rather than public, as its constituency. That made regulators particularly subject to pressure and influence from industry, and led to appalling lack of energy in its effort to protect against industry excesses (p. 3).

The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling (2011) provides a similar analysis of regulatory failure: "The rig's demise signals the conflicted evolution—and severe shortcomings—of the federal regulation of offshore oil drilling in the United States and particularly of MMS oversight of deep water drilling in the Gulf of Mexico" (pp. 55-56). Some may recall that Secretary of the Interior James Watt created MMS in 1982. As the Commission notes, "[f]rom birth, MMS had a built-in incentive to promote offshore drilling in sharp tension with its mandate to ensure safe drilling and environmental protection" (p. 56).

A far greater crisis of global warming threatens devastating changes to our world. Fossil fuel consumption is central to the crisis (National Research Council, 2011). In the interest of maximizing capital accumulation, many with substantial holdings in fossil fuels attempt to influence government policy on these commodities. A key piece of this effort is a network of advocacy groups backed in large part by billionaires Charles and David Koch, principal owners of Koch Industries, one of the largest privately held corporations in the world and second largest in the United States employing 60,000 workers with annual revenue of $115 billion; petroleum refining and distribution is a major segment of this diverse multinational corporation (Lewis, Holmberg, Fernandez Campbell & Beyoud, 2013). The Koch brothers, who's combined worth is more than $82 billion, have amassed a political machine that has more than three times the staff of the Republican National Committee. The brothers personally intended to spend approximately $900 million on the 2016 presidential and congressional contests. One Koch-funded political advocacy group has asked politicians to sign a pledge to oppose any legislation relating to climate change that includes a net increase in government revenue. Fifty-seven of the 76 new freshman Republican members of the House of Representatives in 2010 who signed the pledge received campaign contributions from Koch Industries' political action committee. Included among the 140 House members, 26 senators, and 8 governors who signed the pledge are recent presidential hopefuls Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Scott Walker (Gleckman, 2015; Mayer, 2013).

The Koch brothers together with a group of billionaires that includes Mellon banking heir Richard Mellon Scaife, chemical industry magnate John M. Olin, and electronics moguls Harry and Lynde Bradley have promoted the rise of the radical right in American politics (Mayer, 2016). With regard to climate change, one measure of their success is the proportion of members of the United States Congress who deny or question the science that attributes global warming to human activity: 56% of Republicans in the 114th Congress (Germain & Ellingboe, 2015).

A large-scale study by the Pew Research Center (2015) found that "Americans' political leanings are a strong factor in their views about issues such as climate change and energy policy" (p. 6). For example, 71% of Democrats and 27% of Republicans say the Earth is warming due to human activity. A similar survey by Gallup (2015) found that 40% of conservative Republicans believe effects of global warming will never occur. In short, Republicans typically espouse views on global warming expressed by party leaders, most of whom align with Koch Industries' position on the matter. Among these is President Donald Trump: "I'm not a big believer in man-made climate change" (Denis, 2016). Another high-profile party leader is recent presidential hopeful Ted Cruz, who in August 2015 denied the existence of climate change and claimed that federal agencies lie to the public about research on global warming:

> "If you look to the satellite data in the last 18 years there has been zero recorded warming. Now the global warming alarmists, that's a problem for their theories. Their computer models show massive warming the satellite says it ain't happening. We've discovered that NOAA, the federal government agencies are cooking the books (Kaplan & Uchimiya, 2015).

If money expended on political campaigns and promotion or condemnation of politicians and policy ideas is a valid indicator of capacity to influence governmental policy, then economic elites and organized groups representing business have massively increased their capacity in the past two decades. The increase was accelerated by Supreme Court decisions in *Federal Elections Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc.* (2007) and *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* (2010), which loosened restrictions on corporate and personal spending in politics. In the 2012 election cycle the top ten individual disclosed donors to outside spending groups—super political action committees (PAC) that can raise and spend unlimited funds, regular PACs that raise contributions capped at $5,000 per election, hybrid PACs, groups formed under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code and 501(c)(4) organizations—gave a total of $210,680,952; some categories of outside spending groups such as 501(c)(4) organizations are not required to disclose contributors. Of this amount, 20% was given to liberals, 80% to conservatives (Opensecrets, 2016a). Excluding party committees, total outside spending increased over 500% from the 1992 election cycle to the

2012 cycle, wherein spending reached $1,038,736,997: $720.4 million (69%) from groups aligned with a conservative viewpoint, $292.9 million (28%) from groups aligned with a liberal viewpoint (Opensecrets 2016b). Total spending on the 2012 election amounted to a record breaking $7.2 billion (Bartolomeo, 2013; Beckel, 2013; Parti, 2013). Although accurate data on total spending in the 2016 election cycle is not available at this time, the Supreme Court's decision in *McCutcheon et al. v. Federal Elections Commission* (2014), which allows unlimited aggregate contributions to federal candidates and parties, will likely have contributed to increased spending and may make officeholders more indebted to wealthy contributors.

For many members of Congress, campaign fundraising on the telephone amounts to more than a third of their daily activity: The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee advises them to spend 40% of their workday on "call time" (Grim & Siddiqui, 2013). For presidential aspirants, solicitation is more narrowly focused as former President Obama explained to a select group of potential donors in Medina, Washington in 2012: "You now have the potential of two hundred people deciding who ends up being elected president every single time. I mean, there are five or six people in this room tonight [who] could simply make a decision 'This will be the next president,' and probably at least get a nomination" (Cockburn, 2016, p. 63).

Wealth as a resource for power to impact government policy is well recognized: campaign funding; support of political advocacy groups; procurement of lobbyists and arrangement of lucrative lobbying positions or other employment for government officials when they leave office; among other mechanisms. Wealth can also be used to effect social consciousness through donations to universities and other organizations for research, educational programming, and dissemination of information and ideas.

The media is central in shaping social consciousness to influence policy and conditions of social life. In his plenary speech at the National Conference for Media Reform, respected journalist Bill Moyers (2007) called attention to "[t]he lobby representing the broadcast, cable, and newspaper industry [that is] extremely powerful, with an iron grip on lawmakers and regulators alike. Both parties bowed to their will when the Republican Congress passed and President Clinton signed the Telecommunications Act of 1996."

According to media critic and scholar Robert McChesney (2004), the Telecommunications Act of 1996 created conditions for the greatest corporate concentration of media in the history of communication. Six corporations presently own 90% of media, and five dominate the industry. The late Ben Bagdikian (2004), Pulitzer-prize winner, former dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of *The New Media Monopoly* characterized the five media giants as a "cartel" that exerts enough influence to shape politics, social attitudes, and values in the United States (p. 3).

One measure of media influence is campaign coverage. For instance, 2016 presidential campaign coverage by ABC, CBS, and NBC on weekday nightly newscasts for 2015 reveals vast difference in the amount of minutes allocated to candidates: Donald Trump 327, Jeb Bush 57, Ben Carson 57, Marco Rubio 22, Ted Cruz 21, Hillary Clinton 121, Bernie Sanders 20 (Tyndall, 2015). Another example is what Thomas Frank (2016) described as the "media's extermination of Bernie Sanders," which interestingly was orchestrated in no small part by the liberal-leaning *Washington Post* through negative editorials and op-eds that outnumbered positive five to one among those that took a stand on the candidate (p. 26).

"Fake news" or deliberately published hoaxes, disinformation, and lies in conventional publications and social media garnered considerable attention in the 2016 election cycle. Among the most widely proliferated fake news stories of 2016 is "Pope Francis shocks world, endorses Donald Trump for president;" others include a secret underground human trafficking and sex abuse operation involving members of the Clinton campaign (Ritchie, 2016). Frank Huguenard, a freelance contributor to the *Huffington Post*, published a fake news article titled "Hillary Clinton to be Indicted on Federal Racketeering Charges" that went viral on social media. President Trump has expanded the definition of fake news to include investigative reporting that is critical of his activities and has called the news media the "enemy of the people." (Grynbaum, 2017). Americans trust in mass media is at its lowest level in polling history according to Gallup (2016), with only 32% saying they have a fair amount or more of trust; 64% of American believe fake news causes "a great deal of confusion" about basic facts of current events (Gallup, 2016). For those Americans who do not trust the news media and are confused about basic current events, one cannot help but be concerned about their understanding of forces shaping governmental policy and their ability to participate critically in the political process.

Efforts of economic elites, corporations, and organized business groups to impact government policy often concern regulation or deregulation favorable to an industry, industry subsidies, increasing corporate market share, tax rates, tax codes, and other policies that ultimately contribute to improving wealth accumulation for economic elites. One indicator of the success of these efforts is the increasing concentration of wealth in our society and globally. From 1978 to 2012 the share of wealth in the U.S. held by the richest 0.1% of society increased steadily from 7% to 22%; for the bottom 90% of families, wealth did not increase at all from 1986-2012 (Saez & Zucman, 2014). Total wealth owned by the top 1% of U.S. households in 2013 was 36.7%. Combined with the next 4%, the top 5% of American households owned 64.9% of all wealth in the country; the bottom 40% of households had negative wealth (Wolff, 2014).

For planetary perspective on wealth concentration, a recent Oxfam (2017) study revealed "eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world" (p.1). An earlier investigation (Oxfam, 2016) reported that the

wealth of the richest 62 people has risen by 44% in the five years since 2010. . . the wealth of the bottom half fell by just over a trillion dollars in the same period—a drop of 41%" (p. 2). As Thomas Piketty (2014) argues, increasing concentration of wealth is a feature of our economic system that threatens democracy. The threat, of course, concerns supplanting popular sovereignty with indirect governance by economic elites. Georgina Murray (2012) explains that power and control is concentrating in a transnational capitalist class created by the merging of factions of various national capitalist classes that are interdependent in their objective of greater capital accumulation.

One apparatus for capital accumulation is tax havens. In 2013 approximately 4% of household net wealth in the United States was held in offshore tax havens (Zucman, 2014). The share of wealth held offshore has been increasing in recent decades and income generated by offshore assets is not reported to the Internal Revenue Service (Saez & Zucman, 2014). For the transnational capitalist class, offshore financial centers enable tax avoidance on a massive scale and provide a resource for advancing their interests. In the progression of transnational capital accumulation "the rise of offshore tax havens is one of its most important (but largely unrecognized) features" (Van Fossen, 2012, p. 99). As the *Panama Papers* reveal, wealthy individuals, corporate persons, prime ministers, presidents, drug traffickers, and other criminals commonly hide their wealth in a shadow world of corporate-financial entities that exists because of government policies and practices of ignoring fraud that have been successfully lobbied for by economic elites (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, 2016). Internationally, the amount of hidden wealth exceeds $7.6 trillion or approximately 8% of the global financial assets of households (Zucman, 2015).

However valuable tax havens may be, a central feature in the progression of transnational capital accumulation has been establishment and maintenance of a shared ideology or common world-view conducive to capital generation for economic elites. While an overview of ideological hegemony is beyond the scope of this discussion (Gramsci, 1971; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Giroux 1981), one instrumental outcome of hegemony is a criminal justice system that provides differential treatment for elites (Garrett, 2014). Like the public's resignation to wide-scale tax evasion by economic elites, acquiescence to a differentiated system of justice is another indicator of democracy's distress. Former Attorney General Eric Holder's testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee exemplifies the justice divide in the United States (Gongloff, 2013):

> "I am concerned that the size of some of these institutions becomes so large that it does become difficult for us to prosecute them when we are hit with indications that if you do prosecute, if you do bring a criminal charge, it will have a negative impact on the national economy, perhaps even the world economy.

Difficult indeed, in the eight years after the financial crisis that initiated the Great Recession no major financial executive has gone to prison for fraudulent activity. Only one trader at Credit Suisse, Kareem Serageldirn, is serving a thirty-month sentence for inflating the value of mortgage bonds in his portfolio (Cohen, 2015). Across town from Wall Street during those same eight years, police vans patrolled with a big net gathering suspicious-looking persons and connecting them with the criminal justice system. Thousands were detained and charged in this volume-arresting law enforcement technique that damaged many lives; a record 684,724 people were stopped and searched in New York in 2011. One man was sentenced to 40 days in Rikers Island prison for public display of a marijuana cigarette, which occurred when he emptied his pockets to comply with police demands (Taibbi, 2014). In 2012, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, better known as HSBC, settled with the government for $1.92 billion to avoid indictment for illegal money laundering for nations like Iran and North Korea, and Mexican drug cartels. Among these is the Sinaloa Cartel, which is feared for its horrific torture videos, and public chain sawing and disemboweling of its enemies (Protess & Silver-Greenberg, 2012; Taibbi, 2014). Since 2008, twenty global banks have paid more than $235 billion in fines and compensation for breaking financial regulations (Dzimwasha, 2015). In 2013 wealthy sixteen-year-old Ethan Couch was sentenced in Texas to 10 years probation for several counts of intoxication manslaughter and intoxication assault. He avoided incarceration for the four people he killed because of "affluenza," a condition that manifests lack of personal responsibility and unawareness of consequences resulting from a privileged, wealthy life (Wang, 2016). In New York in 2014, Eric Garner, on suspicion of selling loose cigarettes and after stepping away from handcuffs, was thrown to the ground by police officers and put in a chokehold, whereupon he died of asphyxiation gasping "I can't breathe" eleven times (Baker, Goodman & Mueller, 2015).

The disparity in American justice and ascendance of transnational capitalists sketched above reflect a wide and increasing divide in wealth and power that is debilitating democracy and fostering plutocracy. While American democracy has always been at risk, advancements in the past have nurtured optimism about its viability: direct election of senators; establishment of Social Security and Medicare; expansion of civil rights, voting rights; dismantling of impediments to voter registration; broadening of political leadership—women and minorities; and efforts to reduce money in politics; among other democratic improvements. Deflection of this trajectory is indicative of a distress that has been metastasizing for quite some time: increasing amounts of money in politics (Kuhner, 2014; Lessig, 2011; Mayer, 2016); new restrictions on voting—photo identification and other constraints in 21 states since 2010 (Brennan Center, 2016); gerrymandering to enable minorities to defeat majorities in elections (McGann, Smith, Latner & Kenna, 2016).

Other distress signals are clear. Most Americans do not think wealth should be as concentrated as it is in our society but elected officials sustain policies that contribute to even greater concentration (Newport, 2015; Norten & Ariely, 2011; Scheiber & Sussman, 2015). In 2008, over 90% of Americans said the United States should act to reduce global warming, even if it has economic costs (Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf, 2009). As noted above, most majority party members of the 114th Congress deny or question the science that attributes global warming to human activity. In February 2016 the Supreme Court issued an unprecedented stay on the Obama administration's Clean Power Plant rule (Meyer, 2016). President Trump has indicated he may withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, the first global treaty to attenuate climate change (Chestney, 2017).

Distress is also evident in healthcare. Most Americans (78%) are dissatisfied with the total cost of healthcare in the country and most (51%) think it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that all Americans have healthcare coverage (Gallup, 2016c). Although the Affordable Care Act has reduced the number of uninsured, about 35 million are still without coverage and many middle-class Americans have been burdened with higher premiums and higher out-of-pocket expenses as the healthcare industry transfers the cost of care to patients with high deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, and limited provider networks (Lieberman, 2015). The majority of Americans think government should take action to lower prescription drug prices (DiJulio, Firth & Brodie, 2015), but costs continue to increase and none of the proposals in Congress to address the matter has come even close to passage.

Another healthcare issue with serious consequences is high anxiety resulting from the precariousness of employment. According to sociologist Amitai Etzioni, findings from a study on job security "support our hypothesis that the majority of Americans have a wide spread sense of economic insecurity" (Greenburg Quinlan Rosner Research, 2015, p. 1). As managers and spokespersons for the national economic/corporate elite and the international capitalist class attempt to induce American production workers to accept job insecurity, low wages, and wage stagnation as the natural order of the global economy, they are finding acquiescence somewhat difficult to achieve (Mishel, Gould & Bivens, 2015): Public approval of Congress in early 2016 was 13% (Gallup, 2016d); anti-establishment candidate Donald Trump was elected president. Still, a political system anchored even more securely to money and the absence of effective large-scale educational programming to develop citizens' knowledge and skills for political participation provides reassurance for the economic elite.

If the United States is not yet a plutocracy, signals that it is becoming one are unmistakable. Democracy has always been a serious threat to aspiring plutocrats and oligarchs, and they do their best to suppress it. Explicit political education is required to prepare democratic citizens who can participate critically and effectively in shaping the direction and quality of social life. A century ago John Dewey (1917) counseled wisely on this matter: "Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife. Moreover, it is only education which can guarantee widespread community of interest and aim" (p. 223).

3 The failure of social education

To recall conditions of increasing wealth concentration and machinations of power capacitated by wealth seems idle were it not for the tendency to forget this knowledge and its significance when the topic of educational goals and achievement in public schools are under consideration. While major educational policy documents occasionally allude to the school's obligation to prepare thoughtful democratic citizens, the focus is development of communication and calculation skills, the most basic human cognitive requirements for industrial work. Subordinate to this requisite common core of human capital is content knowledge and skills in the sciences and technology, which are commonly valuated by educators and educational policy-makers in terms of their instrumentality in the workplace. Discussion or promotion of basic skills development and academic discipline knowledge in relation to preparation for political participation is extremely rare in educational policy discourse and the media. Politicians, education officials, and the media seldom decry shortcomings of schools in preparing young people for political participation: Preparation that includes students' understanding of how the power of wealth is employed to influence social attitudes, values, and government policy; their ability to critically analyze social issues and engage effectively in the political process. There is little concern that high school students are not often asked to critique the structure of society and its institutions, and imagine other possibilities.

The inability of the public to arrest and reverse the increasing concentration of wealth and power in society and significantly mitigate, let alone eradicate, pernicious conditions of social life described in the preceding section attest to the failure of social education. One of the more salient metrics of failure is the dismal rate of voting in the United States: 31st among 34 countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (Silver, 2015). Voter turnout for presidential elections in the United States has declined from the 1960s; as American society has become more educated, its citizens vote less (United States Elections Project, 2016). The segment of the electorate that most recently experienced our social education programs, 18-24 year-olds, vote the least of any age group in the nation: 38% in the 2012 election compared to 63.4% for those age 45-64 (File, 2014). While increasing voter turnout expands the voice of the people, even a significant upsurge would not likely cure our democracy's distress if a substantial portion of the electorate has poor understanding of social issues, relations of power, and weak critical thinking skills. Perhaps, as Jason Brennan (2012) argues, our democracy

would be better off if uniformed, irrational, immoral voters stayed away from the polls. It is troubling to consider the extent to which these voters are relied upon.

Another related indicator of the ineffectiveness of our social education programs in recent decades is a decline in political knowledge among young people: Americans aged 18-29 years in 1964 had much more political knowledge than their counterparts in 2000 (Wattenberg, 2002). Similarly, a survey of college freshman in 2002 found only 26% said that "keeping up with politics" was important to them compared to 58% in the class of 1972 (Wattenberg & Lineberry, 2002). These declines are also reflected in the broader population: The proportion of adults who "follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time" decreased from the late 1960s and early 1970s—1966/35%, 1972/36%, 1974/39%—where in 2004 and 2008 the proportion was 26% each year (American National Election Studies, 2008).

Most would probably agree that effective social education programs should cultivate virtues of concern for justice and the public good that are emblematic of democratic character. Research, however, shows that Millennials, far from being civic-minded, are the most narcissistic generation in recent history. They are less likely to think about social problems and to be interested in politics than Baby Boomer and Generation X youths (Twenge, 2006). With the promotion and proliferation of neoliberal ideology it is perhaps not surprising that today's youths evince extreme individualism and materialism, often do not feel a need to help others, and have little civic engagement (Smith, Christofferson, Davidson, & Snell Herzog, 2011). To what extent are ideologies examined and critiqued in social education programs?

Declining civic engagement has been documented for decades: Between 1973 and 1994 civic engagement involving work for a political party, service on a committee, or attendance at a public meeting on town or school affairs declined by over 35% (Gould, 2011). In the 1990s books with portentous titles such as *The Public Voice in a Democracy at Risk* from the Eisenhower Leadership Group explained how too many of us are leaving the work of civic engagement to others (Salvador & Sias, 1998). William Greider's (1992) *Who Will Tell the People: Betrayal of American Democracy* reported on the public's surrender of power to corporations and the wealthy. A few years later, Noam Chomsky (1999) provided a broader analysis of neoliberalism and the global order, and the depoliticized public that goes along with the economic elite's program. Warnings continued as the new century unfolded. Henry Giroux's (2006) *America on the Edge* told of an insidious neoliberal ideology permeating our culture and its schools, replacing concern for community with narrow self-interest. Foreshadowing the 2016 presidential race, Sheldon S. Wolin's (2008) *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* explained the public's complacency with theatrical, symbolic, managed democracy where economic elites have conjoined with the state to shepherd a distracted, politically addled electorate to a promised-land of market bliss. Currently, 71% of Americans aged 18 to 29 describe themself as not "politically engaged" or not "politically active" (Institute of Politics, 2016, p.4).

Other evidence on the failure of social education may be found in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for civics and history. Following initial administration of the civics assessment in 1969, scores declined for several decades. For students aged 17, scores on citizenship knowledge in 1976 were significantly lower than 1969 (Stedman, 2009). The decline corresponded with a back-to-basics conservative restoration in schools in the mid-1970s and a shift away from issues-centered social studies of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the last period when issues approaches to social studies were popular (Evans, 2011). One interesting finding from the early civics assessments was a change in seventeen-year-olds' sense of political efficacy: In 1969 73% reported they thought they could have influence on decisions of local government; in 1976, significantly fewer, 56%, thought they could have influence (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1978).

NAEP civics scores for students in grade 8 and 12 remained stable from 1988 to 2006 (Stedman, 2009). For perspective, on the 1998 civics assessment, 35% of public school 12th graders scored *below* basic while only 26% scored at or above proficient (Lutkus, Weiss, Campbell & Lazer, 1999). Among a selected sample of 38 questions provided by the NAEP from the 1998 civics assessment for 12th graders, the one most frequently answered incorrectly was "explain two ways democratic society benefits from citizens actively participating in the political process"—only 9% of test-takers provided a "complete" answer to the question (Johnson & Vanneman, 2001, p. 5). The 2010 civics assessment revealed that 12th graders scored significantly lower than 2006: 36% scored *below* the "basic" level, which is the lowest level and denotes only partial mastery of knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at a given grade (Institute of Education Sciences, 2010a). Students in grade 12 did not participate in the 2014 civics assessment due to lack of funding; a telling indicator of the value assigned to civics education.

Scores for 12th graders are worse on the NAEP United States history assessment: 59% scored *below* basic in 1994; 58% were *below* basic in 2001 (Lapp, Grigg & Tay-Lim, 2002). Scores improved on the 2006 assessment with only slightly more than half (53%) of 12th graders scoring *below* basic; 13% scored at or above proficient (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006). The average score for 12th graders on the 2010 assessment was lower but not statistically different from the score in 2006: 55% scored *below* basic in 2010 (Institute of Education Sciences, 2010b). Students in grade 12 did not participate in the 2014 United States history assessment due to lack of funding.

Although higher education is not the focus here, investigations of this population's capacity for informed political participation are discouraging. A large-scale

study by the Intercollegiate Study Group (ISI) (2006) surveyed 14,000 college freshman and seniors on their knowledge of United States history and institutions. Both groups scored very low. The ISI report, *The Coming Crisis in Citizenship,* concluded "if the survey were administered as an exam in a college course, seniors would fail with an overall average score of 53.2 percent, or F on a traditional grading scale" (p. 6). It is surprising that at 16 of the 50 colleges in the study, including Yale, Brown, and Georgetown researchers found that seniors knew less than freshman, a phenomenon the investigators described as "negative learning" (p. 12). An even larger survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that only a third of 24,000 students queried felt strongly that their civic awareness had expanded in college (Dey, 2009). Another national study shows only a quarter of college seniors report that their understanding of social problems and knowledge about people from different cultures and races was much stronger than when they were freshmen (Finley, 2012).

It is reasonable to argue that knowledge of specific facts that appear in civics and history assessments mentioned above is not necessarily indicative of person's civic engagement or disposition thereof: How would Cesar Chavez, Pete Seeger, and Rosa Parks have scored? Objections to banking methods of education often associated with depositing official facts and information in the minds of students also seem reasonable when development of thoughtful, reflective citizens is a goal. Nevertheless, NAEP scores provide some indication of high school seniors' capacity to engage critically in the political process. Despite the positive spin in NAEP civics and history reports, it is difficult to conclude from students' scores that schools have been preparing young people adequately for democratic citizenship: approximately 75% of high school seniors do not have knowledge and skills to perform civics school work proficiently let alone undertake the civic responsibility of informed, critical, judicious participation in politics.

There has always been debate over social education in American public schools. In the first half of the last century much of it focused on whether social education should be comprised solely of instruction in history or include social studies courses such as civics, geography, economics, and psychology. In either case, traditional instructional methods of transmitting facts and information dominated. Early last century, challenges to cultural transmission models came from George Counts and other progressive educators who argued that schools have a mission to improve society. Social studies educators such as Harold Rugg in the 1930s and others in the late 1960s and early 1970s attempted to move the field toward more critical, issues-centered instructional approaches to strengthen students' preparation for reflective, engaged democratic citizenship. These approaches promote student investigation, analysis, and deliberation on important social issues. Other new, non-conventional approaches in the Sixties era sought to emphasize understanding and development of inquiry skills in the social sciences, and asked students to draw their own conclusions from data—Man A Course of Study. All these efforts to transform social education through emphasis on development of critical thinking and analytical skills, and challenging students to examine underlying causes of serious social problems and to critique society were effectively suppressed. Historically, conservative forces have secured the dominance of a social education form that focuses on transmission of official knowledge and emphasizes social control and socialization, particularly to the norms of corporate capitalism (Evans, 2004, 2011).

A key element of social education for conformity and control is the textbook, which has long been recognized as the central instructional resource and *the* source of knowledge (Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1979; Cuban, 1991, 1993; Wade, 1993). Studies of social studies textbooks from the 1960s through the 1980s found them generally dull, biased, superficial, and uncritical (Sewall, 1988; White, 1988). In the 1990s, an analysis of 12 leading high school United States history texts by James W. Loewen (1995) concluded "[i]n short, textbook authors portray a heroic state, and like other heroes, this one is pretty much without blemishes. Such an approach converts textbooks into anti-citizenship manuals—handbooks for acquiescence" (p. 210). A more recent review of popular high school history textbooks found that "[n]one is distinguished or even very good. . . [t]he best are merely adequate" (Ravitch, 2004, p. 8).

Other studies of high school social studies textbooks provide evidence of hegemonic ideology functioning in schools (Apple, 1979). Jean Anyon's (1979) analysis of seventeen high school United States history books illustrates that the "symbolic legitimation of powerful groups in the textbook version of economic and labor history . . . indicates that school curricula can lay a subjective basis for social control" (p. 385). According to Anyon, "[t]he textbooks provide an invisible means of soliciting their [students'] support" of the powerful groups that influence the economic and social system (p. 385). Similar findings come from a study of the treatment of corporate influence on government by leading high school United States history and American government textbooks: "ideological judgments and beliefs embedded in selectivity of the information provided . . . lend support for corporate activities and economic arrangements conducive to corporate interests. This bias renders these textbooks inadequate for developing students' understanding of corporate involvement in the electoral process and policy decision-making" (Neumann, 2014a, p. 66). A study of the eight economics textbooks used in contemporary American high schools found that seven do not address wealth distribution, a fundamental measure for evaluating the economic system of a given society (Neumann, 2014b).

When dull, superficial, uncritical, biased textbooks are combined with a pervasive conception of instruction as knowledge transmission and dictates to address massive sets of facts and information, and maintain order in classrooms of thirty to forty students, it is perhaps understandable how preparation of young people for

critical, contested political participation gets short-changed. Ironically, social studies teachers see the goal to "prepare good citizens" to be their top priority, but the most frequently reported instructional strategy for high school social studies teachers is to have students "listen to lectures" (Theiman et al., 2013, pp. 52-53). As Larry Cuban (2016) reports on his return to high school history classrooms, instruction in many schools has not changed much in the past half century: teacher-centered lecture; reliance on textbooks, worksheets, and tests. Ronald W. Evans (2011), drawing from Tyack's and Tobin's (1994) "grammar of schooling" construct—splintering of knowledge into departments, classification of students, divisions of space and time, awarding of grades and credit—characterizes the endurance of teacher-centered methods focused on lower-level cognition as the "grammar of social studies" (p. 196). The grammar of social studies is reinforced by standardized testing that emphasizes recall of facts; curriculum and textbooks that are not conducive to inquiry, diverse perspectives, controversy, judgment of policy, and that have minimal attention to contemporary issues; and a system with few incentives for teacher innovation. Evans (2015), recipient of the prestigious 2015 Jean Dresden Grambs Distinguished Career Research in Social Studies Award, captures the nature of contemporary social education in the title of his most recent book: *Schooling Corporate Citizens.*

4 Hope?

However entrenched the grammar of social studies may be, possibilities for change exist. Conceptual insights may be found in critical theory. Instruction on critical pedagogy by teacher educators in social studies methods and social foundations of education has transformative potential. Historians of social education such as Evans shine light on latent possibilities of once-popular issues-centered approaches to preparing young people for political participation. Other ideas from the past also hold promise. Resuscitating inquiry approaches of Sixties era New Social Studies methods, Sam Wineburg and others in the Stanford History Education Group (2016) have developed instructional strategies and document-based lessons that develop students' research and critical thinking skills. Disciplined inquiry within an issues-centered framework and context respectful of teacher professionalism and autonomy could be a powerful and effective amalgamation for improving social education. Although Common Core Sate Standards (CCSS) are part of a larger structure of reform for social efficiency and are focused on preparing young people for the workforce or higher education that leads to more technical, professional, and leadership positions in the global economy, the attention to development of inquiry and critical thinking skills in CCSS for literacy in history/social studies, and implied teacher autonomy in the standards could be a lever for creating a form of social education with features mentioned above.

Even as distress in America's democracy appears to be deepening, certain conditions offer hope that that all may not be lost. Freedom of speech remains a powerful dynamic and numerous forums for communication are available. Sympathy and mutual reliance reflected in social groups organized to reduce hunger and poverty, improve human rights, promote peace and other human welfare causes represent possibilities for reviving civic engagement. The environmental movement has considerable potential as a galvanizing force for democracy, particularly its causes of arresting climate change and transitioning to sustainable forms of energy. Another example is the Occupy Wall Street movement that arose in Manhattan in August 2011 and spread to more than 80 countries by October reveals potential for large-scale activism against anti-democratic corporations and economic elites intent on undermining the will of the people to accelerate their accumulation of capital. Supporters of presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, whose platform included campaign finance reform, tax reform, greater equity in income and wealth, and improvement of social security, healthcare, and other social welfare programs constitute a significant mobilizing force that could reinvigorate democracy.

America is at a critical juncture. Other western countries may also be approaching that point. Is the strength of democratic character reflected in the groups and activities mentioned above a sufficient catalyst to eventually put democracy's distress in remission? Should we count on it? Or do educators and citizens need to work toward reorganizing the educational reform agenda to prioritize transformation of social education and establish the preparation of young people for political participation as the primary obligation of public schooling?

References

American National Election Studies. (2008). *General interest in public affairs 1960-2008*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Political Studies.

Anyon, J. (1979). Ideology and United States history textbooks. *Harvard Educational Review*, *49*(3), 361-386.

Apple. M. W. (1979). *Ideology and curriculum*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Baker, A., Goodman, J. D. & Mueller, B. (2015, June 13). Garner's death. *The New York Times*, p. A1.

Bagdikian, B. (2004). *The new media monopoly: A completely revised and updated edition with seven new chapters, 20th edition*. Boston: Beacon.

Bartolomeo, L. (2013). *The political spending of 501(c)(4) nonprofits in the 2012 election*. Washington, DC: Sunlight Foundation. Retrieved from http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2013/05/21/the-political-spending-of-501c4-nonprofits-in-the-2012-election/

Beckel, M. (2013). *Spending by outside groups topped $1 billion by election day*. Washington, DC: Center for Public Integrity. Retrieved from https://www.publicintegrity.org/2012/11/07/11789/spending-outside-groups-topped-1-billion-election-day

Bordieu, P. & Passerson, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. London: Sage.

Brennan Center. (2015). Voting laws roundup 2015. New York: Brennan Center for Justice. Retrieved from https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/voting-laws-roundup-2015

Brennan, J. (2012). *The ethics of voting*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chestney, N. (2017, January 30). U.S. will change course on climate policy says former EPA transition head. *Reuters*. Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-epa-idUSKBN15E1MM

Chomsky, N. (1999). *Profit over people: Neoliberalism and global order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 50, (2010).

Cockburn, A. (2016). Down the tube: Television, turnout, and the election-industrial complex. *Harper's*, *331*(1991), 63-68.

Cohen, W. D. (2015, September). How wall street's bankers stayed out of jail. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/

Cuban, L. (1991). History of teaching in social studies. In J. P. Shaver (Ed.), *Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning* (pp. 197-209). New York: Macmillan.

Cuban, L. (1993). *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms 1880-1990*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cuban, L. (2016). *Teaching history then and now: A story of stability and change in schools.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

DeLeon, A. P. & Ross, E. W. (2010). *Critical theories, radical pedagogies, and social education: New perspectives for social studies education*. Boston: Sense

Denis, B. (2016, March 22). Trump: 'I'm not a big believer in man-made climate change.' *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/03/22/this-is-the-only-type-of-climate-change-donald-trump-believes-in/

Dewey, J. (1917). The need of an industrial education in an industrial democracy. In G. L. Swiggett (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Second Pan American Scientific Congress* (pp. 222-225). Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

Dey, E. (2009). *Civic responsibility: What is the campus climate for learning?* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

DuJulio, B., Firth, J. and Brodie M. (2015). Kaiser health tracking poll: October 2015. Washington, DC: The Henry J. Kaiser Foundation. Retrieved from http://kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-october-2015/

Dzimwasha, T. (2015, May 24). 20 global banks have paid $235bn in fines since the 2008 crisis. *International Business Times*. Retrieved from http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/20-global-banks-have-paid-235bn-fines-since-2008-financial-crisis-1502794

Evans, R. W. (2004). *The social studies wars: What should we teach the children?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Evans, R. W. (2011). *The tragedy of American school reform: How curriculum politics and entrenched dilemmas have diverted us from democracy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Evans, R. W. (2015). *Schooling corporate citizens: How accountability reform has damaged civic education and undermined democracy.* New York: Routledge.

Federal Election Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc., 551 U.S. 449 (2007).

File, T. (2014). *Young-adult voting: An analysis of presidential elections, 1964-2012*. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau.

Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission. (2011). *The financial crisis inquiry report*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

Finley, A. (2012). *Making progress? What we know about the achievement of liberal education outcomes.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Frank, T. (2016). Swat team: The media's extermination of Bernie Sanders – and real reform. *Harper's*, *333*(1998), 26-35.

Gallup. (2015). *Conservative republicans alone on global warming's timing*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/182807/conservative-republicans-alone-global-warming-timing.aspx

Gallup. (2016a). *Americans' trust in media sinks to new low*. Washington, DC: Author. Retreived from

Gallup. (2016b). *Many Americans believe fake news is sowing confusion* http://www.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.journalism.org/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/pj_2016-12-15_fake-news_0-02/

Gallup. (2016c). *Healthcare system: Historical trends*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/4708/healthcare-system.aspx

Gallup. (2016d). *No improvement in congress approval, at 13%.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx

http://www.gallup.com/poll/189848/no-improvement-congress-approval.aspx?g_source=Politics&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles

Garrett, B. (2014). *Too big to jail: How prosecutors compromise with corporations*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Germain, T. and Ellingboe, K. (2015, January 8). The a not-science climate denier caucus: 114th congress edition. *ThinkProgress*. Retrieved from http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/01/08/3608427/climate-denier-caucus-114th-congress/

Gilens, M. & Page, B. I. (2014). Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens. *Perspectives on Politics*, *12*(3), 564-581.

Giroux, H. A. (1981). *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2006). *America on the edge: Henry Giroux on politics, culture, and education*. New York: Palgrave/MacMillan.

Gleckman, H. (2015, June 2). What's up with the 'no climate change' pledge? *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com

Glickman, R. L. (2010). Regulatory blowout: How regulatory failure made the BP disaster possible, and how the system can be fixed to avoid a recurrence. *GW Law Faculty Publications & Other Works*. Paper 608.

Gongloff, M. (2013, March 6). Eric Holder admits some banks are just too big to prosecute. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/06/eric-holder-banks-too-big_n_2821741.html

Gould, J. (Ed.). (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools.* Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks.* New York: International Publishers.

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. (2015). *Americans worry about job security, affording retirement*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://icps.gwu.edu/sites/icps.gwu.edu/files/downloads/2015_04_06_GW_economic%20insecurity%20%281%29.pdf

Greider, W. (1992). *Who will tell the people? Betrayal of American democracy.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Grim, R. & Siddiqui, S. (2013, January 8). Call time for congress shows how fundraising dominates bleak work life. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/08/call-time-congressional-fundraising_n_2427291.html

Grynbaum, M. H. (2017, February 17). Trump calls the news media the enemy of the people. New York Times. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/business/trump-calls-the-news-media-the-enemy-of-the-people.html?_r=0

Institute of Education Sciences. (2006). *The nation's report card: Civics 2006 national assessment of educational progress at grades 4, 8, and 12.* Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, United States Department of Education

Institute of Education Sciences. (2010a). *The nation's report card: Civics 2010 national assessment of educational progress at grades 4, 8, and 12.* Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, United States Department of Education.

Institute of Education Sciences. (2010b). *The nation's report card: U.S. history 2010 national assessment of educational progress at grades 4, 8, and 12.* Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, United States Department of Education

Institute of Politics. (2016). *Survey of young Americans' attitudes towards public service 29th edition: March 18 to April 3, 2016*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. (2016). The panama papers: Politicians, criminals and the rogue industry that hides their cash. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from panamapapers.icij.org

Johnson, C. & Vanneman, A. (2001). Civics: What do 12th graders know, and what can they do? *NAEP Facts*, *6*(4).

Kaplan, R. & Uchimiya, E. (2015, September 1). Where the 2016 republican candidates stand on climate change. *CBS News*. Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com/news/where-the-2016-republican-candidates-stand-on-climate-change/

Kuhner, T. K. (2014). *Capitalism v. democracy: Money in politics and the free market constitution*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford Law Books.

Lapp, M. S., Grigg, W. S., & Tay-Lim, B. S. (2002). *The nation's report card: U.S. history 2001*. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E. & Roser-Renouf, C. (2009). *Climate change in the American mind: Americans' climate change beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences, and actions*. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change and George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication.

Lessig, L. (2011). *Republic, lost: How money corrupts congress—and a plan to stop it*. New York: Grand Central Publishing.

Lewis, C., Holmberg, E., Fernandez Campbell, A. & Beyoud, L. (2013, July 1). Koch millions spread influence through non-profits, colleges. *Investigative Reporting Workshop: American University School of Communication*. Retrieved from http://investigativereportingworkshop.org/investigations/the_koch_club/story/Koch_millions_spread_influence_through_nonprofits/

Lieberman, T. (2015). Wrong prescription? The failed promise of the affordable care act. *Harper's*, *331*(1982), 29-38.

Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York: New Press.

Lutkus, A. D., Weiss, A. R., Campbell, J. & Lazer, S. (1999). *The NAEP 1998 civics report card for the nation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Mayer, J. (2013, June 30). Koch pledge tied to congressional climate inaction. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/koch-pledge-tied-to-congressional-climate-inaction

Mayer, J. (2016). *Dark money: The hidden history of the billionaires behind the rise of the radical right*. New York: Doubleday.

McChesney, R. W. (2004). *The problem of the media: U. S. communication politics in the twenty-first century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

McCutcheon et al. v. Federal Elections Commission, 572 U.S. ___, (2014).

McGann, A. J., Smith, C. A., Latner, M., and A. Keena. (2016). *Geryymandering in America: The house of representatives, the supreme court, and the future of popular sovereignty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meyer, R. (2016, February 12). Did the supreme court doom the Paris climate change deal? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com

Mishel, L, Gould, E., & Bivens, J. (2015). *Wage stagnation in nine charts*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/publication/charting-wage-stagnation/

Moyers, B. (2007, January 12). Plenary Speech. The National Conference for Media Reform, Memphis, Tennessee. Retrieved from http://billmoyers.com/2007/01/12/life-on-the-plantation-january-12-2007/

Murray, G. (2012). Corporate futures and the consequences from the top end of town. In G. Murray & J. Scott (Eds.), *Financial Elites and Transnational Business: Who Rules the World?* (pp. 242-259). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (1978). *Changes in political knowledge and attitudes 1969-76: Selected results from the second national assessment of citizenship and social studies*. Denver: Educational Commission of the States.

National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling. (2011). *Deep water: The gulf oil disaster and the future of offshore drilling. Report to the president*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

National Research Council. (2011). *America's climate choices*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Newport, F. (2015, May 4). Americans continue to say U.S. wealth distribution is unfair. *Gallup*, Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/182987/americans-continue-say-wealth-distribution-unfair.aspx

Norton, M. I. & Ariely, D. (2011). Building a better America – One wealth quintile at a time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(1), 9-12.

Opensecrets. (2016a). *2012 top donors to outside spending groups*. Washington, DC: The Center for Responsive Politics. Retrieved from https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/summ.php?cycle=2012&disp=D&type=V&superonly=N

Opensecrets. (2016b). *Total outside spending by election cycle, excluding party committees*. Washington, DC: The Center for Responsive Politics. Retrieved from https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/cycle_tots.php

Oxfam. (2016). *An economy for the 1%: How privilege and power in the economy drive extreme inequality and how this can be stopped*. Oxford, UK: Author.

Oxfam. (2017). *An economy for the 99%.* Oxford, UK: Author.

Parti, T. (2013, January 31). $7 billion spent on 2012 campaign, FEC says. *Politico*, retrieved from http://www.politico.com/story/2013/01/7-billion-spent-on-2012-campaign-fec-says-87051.html

Pew Research Center. (2015). *Americans, politics and science issues*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/07/2015-07-01_science-and-politics_FINAL.pdf

Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. A. Goldhammer, translator.

Protess, B. & Silver-Greenberg, J. (2012, December 11). Bank said to avoid charges over laundering. *The New York Times*, p. A1.

Ravitch, D. (2004). *A consumers' guide to high school history textbooks*. Washington, DC: The Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Ryan, C. L. & Bauman, K. (2016). *Educational attainment in the United States: 2015*. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau.

Saez, E. & Zucman, G. (2014). Wealth inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from capitalized incomes tax data. Working paper 20625. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Salvador, M. & Silas, P. M. (Eds.). (1998). *The public voice in a democracy at risk.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Scheiber, N. & Sussman, D. (2015, June 4). In equality troubles Americans across party lines, a poll finds. *The New York Times*, p. A1.

Sewall, G. T. (1988). American history textbooks: Where do we go from here? *Phi Delta Kappan, 69*(8), 553-558.

Shaver, J. P., Davis, O. L., & Helburn, S. W. (1979). The status of social studies education: Impressions from three NSF studies. *Social Education, 43*, 150-153.

Silver, D. (2015). *U.S. voter turnout trails most developed countries*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org /fact-tank/2015/05/06/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/

Smith, C., Christofferson, K., Davidson, H., & Snell Herzog, P. (2011). *Lost in transition: The dark side of emerging adulthood.* Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

Stanford History of Education Group. (2016). *Projects*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University. Retrieved from https://sheg.stanford.edu/home_page

Stedman, L. C. (2009). *NAEP long-term trend assessment: A review of its transformation, use, and findings.* Washington, DC: National Governing Board, National Assessment of Educational Progress, United States Department of Education.

Taibbi, M. (2014). *The divide: American injustice in the age of the wealth gap*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.

Theiman, G.Y., O'Brian, J.E., Preston-Grimes, P., Broome, J.P., & Barker, T.W. (2013). What social studies teachers in three states report they do in the classroom. In J. Passe and P. G. Fitchett (Eds.). *The status of social studies: Views from the field* (pp. 41-62). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Twenge, J. M. (2006). *Generation me: Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, entitled — and more miserable than ever before.* New York: Free Press.

Tyack, D. & Tobin, W. (1994). The grammar of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(3), 453-479.

Tyndall, A. (2015, December 21). Campaign 2016 coverage: Annual totals for 2015. *Tyndall Report*. Retrieved from http://tyndallreport.com/comment/20/5773/

United States Elections Project. (2016). *Voter turnout*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. Retrieved from http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout

Van Fossen, A. (2012). The transnational capitalist class and tax havens. In G. Murray & J. Scott (Eds.). *Financial elites and transnational business: Who rules the world?* (pp. 76-99). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Wade, R. C. (1993). Content analysis of social studies textbooks: A review of ten years of research. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *21*(3), 232-256.

Wang, Y. (2016, February 26). For victim of 'affluenza' teen Ethan Couch, a life of paralysis. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com /news/morning-mix/wp/2016/02/22/for-victim-of-affluenza-teen-ethan-couch-a-life-of-paralysis/

Wattenberg, M. P. (2002). *Where have all the voters gone?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wattenberg, M. P. & Lineberry, R. L. (2002). *Government in America*, 10th edition. New York: Longman.

White, J. J. (1988). Searching for substantial knowledge in social studies texts. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 16*(2), 115-140.

Wolff, E. N. (2014). Household wealth trends in the United States, 1962-2013: What happened over the great recession? (Working Paper 20733). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Wolin, S. S. (2008). *Democracy incorporated: Managed democracy and the specter of inverted totalitarianism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zucman, G. (2014). Taxing across boarders: Tracking personal wealth and corporate profits. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *28*(4), 121-48.

Zucman, G. (2015). *The wealth of nations: The scourge of tax havens*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.